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grievance. For England, the country principally affected, the only safe and the only possible attitude lies in the calm, dispassionate, and ungrudging recognition of Germany's right to follow the policy which it thinks right and necessary."

Other chapters in the book which are of interest to the student of politics treat such subjects as The New Colonial Era, Centripetal and Centrifugal Influences, The Outlook of Socialism and The Polish Question.

Mr. Dawson's volume is a sane, scholarly treatment of a theme of genuine interest to all who are watching the great forces at work in world-politics.

B. E. H.

*The Constitutional History of England.* By FREDERICK WILLIAM MAITLAND. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1908. Pp. xxxii, 459.)

Considering the amount of time devoted to the constitutional history of England in our colleges and universities it is a remarkable fact that no satisfactory work exists in moderate compass available as a text-book or reading-book for students. The older essays of Fischel, Fielden, Creasy, Freeman, and Boutmy are brief sketches in large part antiquated. The longer works of Hallam and Taswell-Langmead, though still useful, are far from judicial in their comments and have in them too much of the history and too little of the constitution to meet present-day demands. The work of Medley is scholarly but is based on a topical plan that renders it almost useless for class purposes, while its conciseness and the formality of its style render it of little value to the general reader. No single book exists that covers the whole of English constitutional history, showing not only what the constitution is but how it came about and treating constitutional crises with scientific regard for both sides of the case. A history written in the spirit of Holdsworth's work on English law, but in more moderate compass, would be a great desideratum.

Professor Maitland's book partly fills the gap. It was written twenty years ago as a course of lectures in the University of Cambridge and without thought of publication. It was never revised or brought up to date and might well seem at first sight to be antiquated before it was published. Such, however, is not the case and the work is likely

to stand for many years to come as the best introduction to the subject that we have. The reasons for this statement may be briefly stated. More than any other single writer, Maitland himself has been responsible for the reconstruction which has taken place in recent years of the legal and constitutional history of the period to 1307. The first third of his book is, therefore, largely an anticipation of the changes to come, and instead of being a compilation based on work already printed is in fact a program for the future based on original investigation already under way. Even one familiar with Maitland's later work will find profit in these pages. In the second place the work avoids controversial questions throughout. Its treatment is analytical and descriptive and not evolutionary, and it makes no attempt to study processes of change and development. It deals only with the finished product and ignores causes and consequences. In the third place the work is in largest part an exposition of printed texts, chiefly the statutes. Maitland had the statutes of England at his fingers' ends from first to last and could quote them impeccably. His skill in utilizing the knowledge thus possessed is one of the marked characteristics of this history. No previous writer has ever marshalled such a mass of data in so coherent and lucid a fashion, and so original and informing a commentary can never go out of date.

Maitland's history is not entirely satisfactory, but its defects are inherent in its plan. For example, nothing is said of so important a period as the years from 1641 to 1660, simply because no additions were made during those years to the British system of government. Maitland pays no attention to the conditions under which public opinion was shaped and political theories developed. Consequently his work lacks atmosphere. Furthermore it is often taken up with an excessive mass of details that can hardly have been read to an audience of note-takers, and perhaps for a work on constitutional history we hear almost too much about English law. But it must be remembered that these lectures were not written to be printed and that it is doubtful whether they were delivered to students exactly as they appear here. Maitland was always an interesting lecturer and never more delightful than when speaking *ex tempore*. Some of these pages of details may have been mere aids to memory and guides to thought and not the real substance of the lecture. An examination of the original manuscripts tends to confirm this view. I do not doubt but that the qualities lacking in the printed page are supplied by the lecturer in the actual delivery. If this be true then we may regret the more deeply

that Maitland has never been able to rewrite some of the sections of this book and to give to them that graceful finish and dramatic touch which has made so many of his later writings models of English prose.

CHARLES M. ANDREWS.

*The Reform of the House of Lords.* BY WILLIAM SHARP McKECHNIE.  
(Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons. 1909. Pp. 136.)

The chief function of the house of lords, it is admitted, should be to interpret the will of the people, not to oppose it. Whether it can be said satisfactorily to perform this function is made a matter of doubt by the fact that, whatever the political complexion of the commons, the lords has for many years been dominantly conservative. In a debate in June, 1907, Mr. Balfour ironically observed that "It is a singular thing, when you come to reflect, that the representative system should only hold good when one party is in office, and should break down to such an extent that the non-elective house must be called in to express the mind of the country whenever it lapses into liberalism." Professor McKechnie, within a comparatively small compass, has given a most excellent orientation of the problem of so altering the composition or powers of the lords that it may be rendered either impotent to defeat the desires of the people as truly voiced in the commons, or qualified to assist that body in expressing the matured and reasoned popular will as distinguished from an assumed or ill-considered political opinion of the people. As a basis for criticism the composition and powers of the lords in the relation to the commons are discussed and a comparison of them with foreign upper chambers made. The various proposals and schemes of reconciliation, including that of the select committees of December, 1908, are clearly analyzed, their several merits and defects being impartially stated. In the last chapter the author outlines the general features of what, in his judgment, would furnish the most satisfactory solution of the problem. The work supplements the discussion of the same subject in Lowell's *Government of England*.